

HISTORY OF USS RICHARD S. EDWARDS (DD-950)

USS RICHARD S. EDWARDS (DD-950) is the first ship of the Fleet to be named in honor of Admiral Richard S. Edwards, U.S. Navy.

Richard Stanislaus Edwards, the son of Richard S. Edwards and Lucy Brook Neilson Edwards, was born on February 18, 1885, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He attended Episcopal Academy at Philadelphia prior to his appointment to the U. S. Naval Academy from his native state in 1903. Graduated on September 12, 1906, with the Class of 1907, he served the two years at sea, then required by law, and was commissioned Ensign on September 13, 1908. Through subsequent advancement, he attained the rank of Admiral on April 13, 1945, and was transferred to the Retired List of the U.S. Navy in that rank on July 1, 1947.

Following graduation from the Naval Academy in 1906, he joined the USS MISSOURI, a unit of the Atlantic Fleet. He served in that battleship until August 1907, then had consecutive duty until May 1910 in the USS STEWART, USS HOPKINS, and USS PENNSYLVANIA, all operating in the Pacific. Assigned next to the USS WHEELING, he remained aboard that gunboat, based at the Navy Yard, Puget Sound, Washington, until November 1910. He then reported for fitting out duty in the USS BURROWS, one of the earlier oil-burning, turbine driven destroyers, at the New York Shipbuilding Company, Camden, New Jersey, and upon her commissioning on February 21, 1911, went aboard to serve until October 1912.

When detached from the BURROWS, he had submarine instruction on board the USS CASTINE until January 1913, when he assumed command of the USS C-3. He commanded that submarine for two months, after which he became Commander First Group, Submarine Flotilla, Atlantic Fleet, the first submarine division to be assigned the vital task of defending the Panama Canal. In January 1914, he reported as Executive Officer and Navigator of the USS TALLAHASSEE. From August 1914 to April 1917, he was an Instructor in the Department of Electrical Engineering at the Naval Academy, and while there, participated in the Midshipmen's practice cruises in the summers of 1914 and 1915, on board the USS MISSOUR and USS WISCONSIN, respectively.

A day after the United States entered World War I, on April 6, 1917, he was detached from the Naval Academy for duty as Engineer Officer of the USS KENTUCKY, operating in the Atlantic. He served in that battleship until January 1918, then had duty in the North Sea as Gunnery Officer of the USS KANSAS. Transferred, in a similar capacity, to the USS ARKANSAS, assigned to the British Grand Fleet, he remained aboard her until July 1919.

On July 15, 1919, he reported as Aide and Squadron Gunnery Officer on the staff of Commander Battleship Squadron ONE, Pacific Fleet, and from June 1920 to February 1921, had duty as Aide and Squadron Gunnery Officer on the staff of the Commander Battleship Squadron ONE and Division EIGHT. Continuing staff duty, he next served as Aide and Force Gunnery Officer on the staff of Commander Battleship Force, Pacific Fleet.

In September 1921, he reported as Naval Inspector in Charge at the Naval Ammunition Depot, Kuahua, Territory of Hawaii, and in August 1924, assumed command of the USS WOOD, a unit of Division THIRTY-FOUR, Destroyer Squadron TWELVE, Battle Fleet. Relieved of that command in June 1926, he again had duty until November 1928 as Naval Inspector in Charge at the Kuahua Ammunition Depot. He served as Executive Officer in the USS NEW MEXICO until May 1930, then reported as Aide on the staff of the Commander in Chief, Battle Fleet. On April 1, 1931, that force was redesignated Battle Force, U.S. Fleet, and he continued to serve as Aide until September 1931, with additional duty as Force Gunnery Officer.

Following service on the staff of the Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, he had instruction at the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island from June 1934 until May 1935. He then became Commander Submarine Squadron SIX, with additional duty in command of Submarine Division TWELVE. In June 1937, he assumed command of the Submarine Base, New London, Connecticut, with additional duty in command of submarines and attending craft based there (title change in October 1938 to Commander Submarine Squadron TWO). There he also served as Inspector of Ordnance in Charge, Naval Mine Depot, New London. While in that command, he participated in the successful salvage of the USS SQUALUS and the rescue of part of her crew when that submarine sank in approximately two hundred forty feet of water off the Isles of Shoals, New Hampshire coast, in 1939. For this service, he was awarded the Navy Cross. The citation follows in part:

For distinguished service. . . as Aide and later as Senior Aide on the Staff of the Commander of the USS SQUALUS Rescue and Salvage Unit. At the first indication of trouble (he) dispatched the USS FALCON of his command and proceeded himself from New London, Connecticut in a destroyer to the scene of the disaster, arriving the following day, May 24, 1939. . . . His advice and cooperation were of inestimable value and contributed greatly to the rescue operations and final successful salvage of the USS SQUALUS.

On June 5, 1940 he assumed command of the USS COLORADO, and in October of that year was relieved for duty in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, D.C. He remained there two months, after which he reported as Commander Submarines, Patrol Force. In February 1941 he transferred to Commander of Submarines, Atlantic Fleet, and from December 1941 until August 1942, served as Deputy Chief of Staff and Aide to the

Commander in Chief, United States Fleet. In October 1944 he was appointed Deputy Commander in Chief, U.S. Fleet and Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, a new post created due to the expansion of Naval activities in the early period of World War II.

He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal and cited "For exceptionally meritorious service . . . as Deputy Chief of Staff to the Commander in Chief, United States Fleet, from January to September 1942; as Chief of Staff and Aide to the Commander in Chief, United States Fleet, from September 1942 to October 1944; and as Deputy Commander in Chief, United States Fleet, and Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, from October 1944 to August 1945. By the exercise of great foresight and brilliant military judgement, (he) provided wise and complete counsel on which to base operations of the United States Fleet. . . The qualities of leadership which Admiral Edwards displayed earned from his subordinates a loyalty and devotion to duty which were reflected throughout the entire naval service. . ."

In accordance with the reorganization of the Navy resulting from Executive Order 9635 of September 29, 1945, his title was changed to Vice Chief of Naval Operations, effective on October 10, 1945. In January 1946 he was designated Commander Western Sea Frontier, a command which embraced a huge sea area off the United States West Coast, extending northward almost to Alaska, westward almost to Hawaii and southward almost to South America.

On January 1, 1947, the operating forces of the Navy were reorganized incident to the processes of streamlining the Navy, reducing command overhead and simplifying fleet organization in the light of war experience. All numbered fleets were abolished except for one task fleet in each ocean, and Admiral Edwards was placed in command of the Pacific Reserve Fleet, composed of ships in the Pacific, in and out of commission. He was so serving when relieved of all active duty, pending his transfer to the Retired List of the U.S. Navy on July 1, 1947.

In addition to the Navy Cross and the Distinguished Service Medal, Admiral Edwards had the World War I Victory Medal, Grand Fleet Clasp (USS ARKANSAS); the American Defense Service Medal, Fleet Clasp (Submarines, Atlantic Fleet); the American Campaign Medal; and the World War II Victory Medal. Admiral Edwards had also been awarded the Legion of Honor, grade of Commander and the Croix de Guerre with Palm by the Government of France, "For exceptional services of war rendered in the course of operations for the liberation of France." The Government of Poland made him a Knight of the Order of the Rebirth of Poland, conferring upon him the medal of the Order of the Commander's Cross with Star. He was an Honorary Knight Commander of the Military Division of the Order of the British Empire, and was awarded the Order of Yun Hui (Grand Cordon) by the Chinese Government.

Admiral Edwards died on June 2, 1956 at the Naval Hospital, Oakland, California, and was interred at Arlington National Cemetery.

USS RICHARD S. EDWARDS (DD-950) was built by the Puget Sound Bridge and Dredging Company, Seattle, Washington. Her keel was laid 29 December 1956. She was launched 24 September 1957 under the sponsorship of Mrs. William B. Franke, wife of the Secretary of the Navy. The destroyer was commissioned in the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, 5 February 1959, Commander Richard R. LAW, U.S. Navy, commanding.

USS RICHARD S. EDWARDS was designed for a length overall of 418 feet, 5 inches; extreme beam of 45 feet, 2 inches; full load displacement of 4,200 tons; maximum navigational draft of 20 feet, 5 inches; a designed speed exceeding 30 knots; and accommodations for 25 officers and 339 men. She was originally armed with 3 5-inch .54 caliber guns; 4 3-inch .50 caliber guns in 2 twin mounts; 1 anti-submarine rocket launcher group (HEDGEHOG); a Drone Anti-submarine Helicopter System (DASH); 1 depth charge track; and 2 depth charge projectors.

RICHARD S. EDWARDS completed fitting out at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard 25 March 1959 and reached her home port of San Diego 28 March to join Destroyer 71, Destroyer Squadron 7. She sailed 6 April on a shakedown cruise that took her to Mazatlan, Mexico; Balboa, Canal Zone; and Valparaiso, Chile. She returned north to San Diego 13 May 1959, resuming western seaboard operations until 5 December when she deployed to join the Seventh Fleet in the Far East.

The destroyer called at Pearl Harbor and was proceeding toward Midway 12 December 1959 when she was diverted to assist merchant tug ELBE at latitude 18°-15' North, longitude 178°-40' East. Four days later she found the merchant tug dead in the water with a manila hawser caught in the propeller. Two former Navy Escort Carriers, which had been in tow of ELBE, were adrift but riding well in heavy seas. The destroyer stood by until merchant tugs arrived 23 December, then continued to Apra Harbor, Guam, arriving 28 December 1959.

RICHARD S. EDWARDS departed Apra Harbor 29 December 1959. The flagship of Destroyer Squadron 7, she guarded BON HOMME RICHARD (CVA-31) during anti-submarine warfare exercises toward Okinawa. She later plane guarded MIDWAY (CVA-41) in the South China Sea before representing the Seventh Fleet 29 March 1960 in celebrating the 10th Anniversary of the founding of Nichinan City, Japan. Captain Harley K. NAUMAN, commanding Destroyer Squadron 7, in RICHARD S. EDWARDS, accepted the civic award presented by Mayor Hajime IDOGAWA in behalf of Colonel Boloner F. N. WIMBERLEY, USA, whose guidance and assistance were instrumental in accomplishing the incorporation of Nichinan City in 1950. Captain NAUMAN, in accepting the award, addressed the distinguished Japanese in their native language: "When people get well acquainted, they become friends. Among friends there is trust. Misunderstandings vanish. We hope the friendship between us, the peoples of Japan and the United States, will continue to grow stronger as time goes on."

The destroyer departed Nichinan 30 March 1960 to serve as the Flagship of the Taiwan Patrol Force until 18 April. She departed Yokosuka 28 April 1960 and returned to San Diego 13 May for operations along the western seaboard. On 4 August 1960, she followed in the wake of BENNINGTON (CVS-20) conducting the Fleet Parade for the Seattle Sea Fair. The destroyer overhauled in the Long Beach Naval Shipyard (16 August-14 October 1960), then sharpened her combat readiness during operations out of San Diego as Flagship of Destroyer Squadron 7.

RICHARD S. EDWARDS again sailed for the Far East 27 February 1961. She arrived at Yokosuka 17 March, joined in tactical exercises with Japanese destroyers, then proceeded to Chinhae Hang, Korea, arriving 4 April 1961. The following day she served as the Flagship of Seventh Fleet Commander, Vice Admiral C. D. GRIFFIN. The destroyer was the site for the graduation ceremony of Midshipmen of the Korean Naval Academy, attended by President Po Sun Yun, Republic of Korea. She departed 6 April for Sasebo, then joined in maneuvers with 40 ships of seven SEATO nations, ranging from Manila Bay for joint amphibious landing operations on Balabagan Island, North Borneo. During these operations, the destroyer plane guarded British carrier HMS VICTORIOUS and was barrier patrol ship for the amphibious assault exercise.

RICHARD S. EDWARDS returned to Subic Bay from Borneo 6 May 1961. She stood out 10 April for the South China Sea in the screen of BON HOMME RICHARD (CVA-31). The afternoon of 17 May 1961, she left the formation to search for survivors of the Philippine fishing trawler DE LA PAZ. Near midnight, she made a rendezvous with SS UNION PIONEER, which had recovered 112 DE LA PAZ survivors. Proceeding to the disaster scene (15°-00'N, 115°-00'E), she searched with floodlights until near dawn of the 18th, but additional survivors were not found. The destroyer rejoined BON HOMME RICHARD, steaming to the Philippines before calling at Hong Kong and ports of Japan. She departed Yokosuka 31 August 1961, bound by way of Hawaii to San Diego, arriving 14 September 1961.

RICHARD S. EDWARDS led her Destroyer Squadron 7 in readiness training out of San Diego, overhauled in the Long Beach Naval Shipyard (March-May 1962), then ranged the western seaboard with carriers KITTY HAWK (CVA-63) and RANGER (CVA-61). She again deployed for the Far East 13 November 1962, arriving at Yokosuka 22 December, then plane guarded RANGER (CVA-61) in the South China Sea, off Okinawa and the Philippines. She patrolled the Taiwan Straits 20 March-28 April 1963, again joined RANGER for fleet tactics east of Honshu, then departed Yokosuka 3 June for return to San Diego 15 June 1963.

RICHARD S. EDWARDS continued coastal operations out of San Diego through 17 December 1963, when she joined CONSTELLATION (CVA-64) in conducting anti-air warfare and surface-air warfare demonstrations reviewed by the Secretary of the Navy. Seaboard training continued until 5 August 1964, when she put to sea with RANGER (CVA-61), bound by way of Hawaii to the Philippines.

The destroyer entered Subic Bay 23 August, joined COONTZ (DLG-9) in exercises off Luzon, then sailed 31 August to take up a patrol station in the Gulf of Tonkin in company with destroyer MORTON (DD-948). The night of 18 September 1964, radarscopes of the two destroyers tracked the shapes of four high-speed targets till they closed to near 2,000 yards, then opened with gunfire, after which all signs of the menacing craft disappeared. These were believed to be North Vietnamese motor torpedo boats, but whether any were sunk or damaged could not be established as no physical evidence such as debris, oil slick or wreckage was found during search of waters in the vicinity of the incident.

RICHARD S. EDWARDS joined CONSTELLATION (CVA-64) off the coast of Luzon 1 October 1964 and departed Subic Bay 3 October to serve off Vietnam as plane guard for carriers BON HOMME RICHARD (CVA-31), RANGER (CVA-61) and HANCOCK (CVA-19). There was brief time out for replenishment in Subic Bay as well as gunfire support and coastal patrol in support of inland military operations in the vicinity of Danang, South Vietnam. She departed "Yankee Station" in the Gulf of Tonkin 3 January 1965 for Subic Bay, then called at Yokosuka. Having steamed nearly 45,000 miles in close support of varied Seventh Fleet missions throughout the Western Pacific, she departed Yokosuka 24 January 1965, bound by way of Hawaii to San Diego, arriving 7 February 1965.

Following coastal training, RICHARD S. EDWARDS overhauled in the Long Beach Naval Shipyard (1 July-6 October 1965). He refresher training included anti-submarine warfare tactics, reaching north off the coast of Oregon. She departed San Diego 1 March 1966 and rejoined the Seventh Fleet at Yokosuka, 19 March 1966. Nine days later she relieved cruiser OKLAHOMA CITY as an "on-call bombardment ship" off the northern coast of South Vietnam. The early afternoon of 28 March 1966 she bombarded Viet-Cong held positions in the vicinity of Cape Varella. With an ammunition replenishment assist from PYRO (AE-24), she furnished gunfire support to friendly forces ashore ranging from the "Demilitarized Zone" dividing North and South Vietnam, south along the littoral of South Vietnam. On completion of her bombardment of 17 April 1966, she had plastered enemy strongholds, bunkers, trenches, stowage areas and ammunition dumps with 2,039 rounds of 5-inch and 251 rounds of 3-inch ammunition since 28 March.

Having been relieved on bombardment station by destroyer ORLECK (DD-886), the destroyer represented the Seventh Fleet at the Nagasaki Port Festival (27-30 April 1966). The highlight came 29 April when distinguished Japanese officials and the radiant Miss Nagasaki enjoyed luncheon on board RICHARD S. EDWARDS while celebrating the original opening of that port city to western commerce. The destroyer returned to Subic Bay 3 May 1966 and sailed on 9 May to plane guard ENTERPRISE (CVAN-65), then HANCOCK (CVA-19) on "Yankee Station" in the Gulf of Tonkin.

While in company with HANCOCK the night of 21 May 1966, a steam generating tube burst in the destroyer's One Alfa boiler.

Her alert boiler watchmen quickly wrapped up the engineering plant to prevent further mishap and the destroyer continued in action until the following night. While proceeding toward Subic Bay, she was caught in a developing typhoon and Seaman Louis P. GARCIA was fatally injured when a hatch fell across his hips. The destroyer entered Subic Bay 27 May 1966 and repairs were complete by 12 June, when she set course to plane guard RANGER (CVA-61) in the Gulf of Tonkin.

On 14 June 1966, RICHARD S. EDWARDS was detached from RANGER's formation to help guard guided missile cruiser CHICAGO (CG-11) as that cruiser pioneered Navy Positive Identification and Radar Advisory Zone (PIRAZ) station ship support. This duty continued until 22 June. During this time, CHICAGO coordinated Seventh Fleet activities by identifying and keeping track of modern aircraft, friendlies as well as hostiles, flying faster than the speed of sound. Sustained PIRAZ support was not only provided to aircraft carriers and task groups of the Seventh Fleet, but also to United States Air Force units. This advanced electronic surveillance significantly improved the anti-air warfare posture of United States units in the Western Pacific.

After parting company with CHICAGO 22 June 1966, RICHARD S. EDWARDS visited Hong Kong, then plane guarded carriers HANCOCK and RANGER off the coast of Vietnam. The night of 11 July 1966, crewmen bailed out of a RANGER jet fighter and RICHARD S. EDWARDS rescued Radar Intercept Officer, Lieutenant (jg) Donald F. GRANITTO, USNR. The pilot was rescued by RANGER. The destroyer continued to plane guard RANGER until 15 July, then patrolled the Tonkin Gulf with DALE (DLG-19) until 25 July. She then rejoined RANGER bound for Yokosuka, departing that port 16 August for return to San Diego, arriving 26 August 1966.

RICHARD S. EDWARDS overhauled in the Long Beach Naval Shipyard, then conducted coastal operations out of San Diego, including the testing and evaluation of new anti-submarine warfare weapons, gunnery exercises and plane guard for CONSTELLATION (CVA-64). These operations continued until 29 August 1967, when she again sailed for the Western Pacific. She arrived at Yokosuka 17 September 1967, ranged to Okinawa, then set course 24 September for the unique "Sea Dragon Operation" against coastal defense sites, waterborne logistic craft and lucrative targets in Vietnam.

RICHARD S. EDWARDS arrived on the "Gun Line" 25 September, joining a gunfire support task unit which included cruiser ST. PAUL (CA-73) and destroyer COLLETT (DD-730). That afternoon she drew hostile fire from enemy coastal guns on Tiger Islands a few miles south of the Demilitarized Zone. All shells fell several thousand yards short of the destroyer. The next day she joined in silencing the Viet-Cong coastal defense installations near Cape Lay.

The destroyer continued to pound enemy coastal strongholds until 1 October, then plane guarded CONSTELLATION (CVA-64) until 7 October. The destroyer replenished in Subic Bay, then returned

to the "Gun Line" 17 October in support of Marines near the Demilitarized Zone.

When Typhoon "Carla" moved into the Tonkin Gulf and approached the Demilitarized Zone 19 October 1967, naval units were ordered south to avoid the storm. Two destroyers, however, RICHARD S. EDWARDS and DUPONT, requested and were granted permission to stay on station in support of Marines until the weather completely precluded the effectiveness of their 5-inch batteries, or until they had expended all of their ammunition.

As other naval units headed south, RICHARD S. EDWARDS and DUPONT (DD-941) briefly left their stations to fill their fuel tanks from oiler MISPILLION (AO-105) and receive ammunition from PYRO (AE-24). This was skillfully carried out in the midst of heavy seas and high winds. Twelve to 15-foot waves crashed on the main deck as 1,000 rounds of ammunition were highlined between ships with professional skill. Even as the ammunition was being stored, the gallant destroyermen sped to aid Marines at the Demilitarized Zone. The destroyer's gunfire quickly silenced a Viet-Cong mortar installation which was harassing a squad of U.S. Marines. Appreciation came from the Marine Gunfire Spotter: "Thanks, glad to have you back on the line."

Vestiges of Typhoon "Carla" remained 20 October 1967 as RICHARD S. EDWARDS fired scores of high explosive projectiles on enemy bunker complexes. Even as empty powder casings were being cleared following this bombardment, a call came and the destroyer responded with DUPONT to silence enemy mortar positions. When clouds had cleared enough for Marine F4 Phantoms to resume air strikes, the men of the two destroyers took advantage of the break to grab some chow and turn to personal chores ignored during the previous 24 hours.

On 22 October, the airborne 3rd Marine Spotter reported "Nice Shooting" following barrages of the two destroyers to break up the North Vietnamese troop and bunker area. RICHARD S. EDWARDS directed her long range 5-inch batteries at numerous other targets during the day, pounding mortar positions, artillery sites and destroying 18 waterborne logistic craft. Around-the-clock support continued as her crew divided into two teams, each standing six hours on watch and six off. She thus produced two gunfire support teams capable of quick reaction and accurate gunfire.

RICHARD S. EDWARDS remained on the bombardment station until the afternoon of 14 November 1967. At 1404, she flashed a message to the 3rd Marines: "After 28 days and 7,000 rounds, we leave with our gun barrels adroop. Our spirit is willing, but our guns are now weak. We retire to regroup, regun and then return on 1 December to take up where we left off." She regunned her 5-inch battery at Kaohsiung, Taiwan, and returned to the "Gun Line" south of the Demilitarized Zone on 1 December 1967. Gunfire support continued until 19 December 1967.

RICHARD S. EDWARDS called at ports of Japan and Okinawa, then resumed gunfire support off the Demilitarized Zone of Vietnam from 19 January through 6 February 1968. She returned to Subic Bay on 8 February and got underway the following day for calls as Brisbane, Australia (17-20 February); and Auckland, New Zealand (23-26 February). After touching Pago Pago, Samoa and Pearl Harbor, she returned to San Diego 12 March 1968. The remainder of the year was taken up in coastal readiness training and overhaul in the Long Beach Naval Shipyard.

RICHARD S. EDWARDS departed San Diego 9 January 1969 for her seventh Western Pacific tour since commissioning. After steaming more than 8,000 miles, by way of Hawaii and Guam, she arrived in Subic Bay on 3 February 1969. She celebrated the 10th anniversary of her commissioning there on 5 February as she prepared for combat operations off Vietnam. She put to sea four days later and reached Vung Tau, South Vietnam, 12 February 1969. After embarking a IV Corps Naval Gunfire Support Liaison Officer, she joined a gunfire support task unit built around the mighty battleship NEW JERSEY (BB-62). On 13 February, she began pounding Viet-Cong troops, artillery and coastal defense sites, ammunition dumps and supply storages in the Mekong Delta Region. This duty continued until 11 March 1969, when she was detached to plane guard TICONDEROGA (CVA-14) for four days.

RICHARD S. EDWARDS returned to the Demilitarized Zone on 3 April 1969 and continued to support Marines in that region until 3 May. After calling at Hong Kong, ports of Japan and Taiwan, she resumed gunfire support near the Demilitarized Zone 29 May 1969. Her last gunfire support mission was conducted 20 June 1969. After calling at Sasebo, she put to sea 28 June 1969, bound by way of Midway and Pearl Harbor to San Diego, arriving 13 July 1969. She remained stationed at San Diego until 10 February 1970, when she entered the Long Beach Naval Shipyard. The destroyer decommissioned there 27 February 1970, in preparation for anti-submarine warfare modernization overhaul expected to be completed in the spring of 1971.

Lieutenant John TURLEY, Jr., U.S. Navy, relieved Commander Joseph E. Murray, Jr., U.S. Navy, on 27 February 1970 and assumed duties as Officer in Charge of the ship for the duration of her yard period. He, with eight Chief Petty Officers, supervised the ASW modernization of RICHARD S. EDWARDS.

During the course of the modernization, the ship was dry docked from 8 May to 22 June 1970. Mount 52 was lifted and placed where Mount 53 had been, and an Anti-submarine Rocket Launcher Group (ASROC) and direct loading magazine were installed where Mount 52 and the after twin 3-inch .50 caliber guns had previously been. The entire superstructure was rebuilt, giving the ship a new bridge, CIC, radio central, torpedo magazine and habitability spaces above the main deck. The depth charges and forward twin 3-inch .50 caliber guns were also removed. Improved, modern ECM, CIC, communications and ASW equipments were installed, along with

extensive improvements to living spaces. The vessel started sea trials in November 1970, continuing through the end of 1970.

On 19 December 1970, the balance of the crew moved to Long Beach. This brought the entire crew together for the first time and marked the beginning of final preparations for the recommissioning of RICHARD S. EDWARDS under the command of Commander Walter C. DEAL, U.S. Navy.

Having completed her ASW conversion at the Long Beach Naval Shipyard, RICHARD S. EDWARDS was recommissioned on 15 January 1971 by Rear Admiral Horace V. BIRD, U.S. Navy, Commander Naval Base Los Angeles/Long Beach. Commander Walter C. DEAL, U.S. Navy, assumed command as the ninth skipper of the destroyer.

As a result of the extensive modernization, the design characteristics of RICHARD S. EDWARDS were altered as follows: full load displacement, 4,100 tons; maximum navigational draft, 15 feet; complement, 17 officers and 270 men, with accommodations for 22 officers and 315 men. With the installation of quick-load ASROC and the associated handling and stowage spaces, the destroyer's battery was reduced to two 5-inch .54 caliber fully automatic rapid-fire gun mounts. Six 21-inch torpedo tubes in two triple mounts were retained as additional ASW armament. The depth charge track and projectors were removed to allow for the installation of a variable depth sonar at a later date. Additional changes accomplished during the overhaul included installation of a high power, hull mounted sonar, modernization of electronic equipment and spaces, installation and rearrangement of living and messing areas, addition of air conditioning to accommodate all living spaces and most working spaces, improved replenishment at sea capability, enlargement of the pilot house and near complete replacement of the deckhouse.

Outfitting and underway operational testing were completed in Long Beach, and on 4 March 1971, RICHARD S. EDWARDS put to sea enroute to her new homeport, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The ship made port calls in San Francisco, Seattle and Vancouver, British Columbia, before arriving in Hawaii on 29 March, as a unit of Destroyer Squadron TWENTY-FIVE, Destroyer Flotilla FIVE.

Shakedown training commenced 10 May 1971 but was interrupted by a search and rescue mission on 13 June, that sent the destroyer 700 miles south of Hawaii in search of survivors from a downed Air Force C-135. Only floating debris was recovered at the scene of the disaster, and the ship returned to Pearl Harbor on 19 June. After completion of shakedown training on 24 June, RICHARD S. EDWARDS remained in the Pearl Harbor area, conducting local operations. The ship and her crew became more familiar with their new home, making a dependent's cruise to Hilo, on the island of Hawaii, from 16-19 July.

On 13 September 1971, RICHARD S. EDWARDS entered the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard for her post-shakedown availability. A

variable depth sonar was added, and the ship was converted to Navy distillate fuel. On 2 December 1971, the ship onloaded the new fuel and lighted fires for the first time using distillate on 6 December. After successfully completing machinery sea trials on 13 December, she returned to the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, where she remained until 6 January 1972.

RICHARD S. EDWARDS was awarded the COMCRUDESPEC Gunners "E", ASW "A" and Operations "E" for excellence during the period ending 31 October 1971.

On 6 January 1972, RICHARD S. EDWARDS completed the final phase of her ASW conversion with a successful test of the variable depth sonar installed by the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard. This ended her post-shakedown availability, and the ship immediately began underway operations in the Hawaii area. On 11 January, during routine steaming off Oahu, RICHARD S. EDWARDS rescued a pilot of the Hawaii Air National Guard who had been forced to abandon his F-102A aircraft when its engine failed.

Training operations at sea continued into February, highlighted by COMPTUEX 4-72 from 31 January to 4 February 1972. In this exercise, RICHARD S. EDWARDS operated as a member of a task unit defending an inter-island passage against mock enemy air and submarine attack. Leaving Pearl Harbor on 19 February, the destroyer steamed to the island of Maui, carrying dependents and guests of the crew for a very special weekend vacation. Returning on 21 February, she remained pierside until 13 March, when another round of local training at sea began.

On 20 March 1972, RICHARD S. EDWARDS was called upon to perform a special duty. Mrs. Dorothy HERRON was visiting Pearl Harbor and requested that a wreath of island flowers be placed on the sea in memory of her son, Radarman Seaman Apprentice Paul Thomas LANE. He was lost at sea on 26 June 1971, when he fell overboard while USS ERNEST G. SMALL (DD-838) was engaged in high speed night maneuvers in the mid-Pacific. The wreath was cast over the side by four RICHARD S. EDWARDS radarmen as the destroyer steamed out of Pearl Harbor on a training exercise of her own.

RICHARD S. EDWARDS participated in only one more local evolution, a convoy exercise on 6 April 1972, before being designated for early deployment to the Western Pacific in direct response to the North Vietnamese invasion of South Vietnam. With only seventy-two hours notice, RICHARD S. EDWARDS left Pearl Harbor on 10 April in company with USS DAVIDSON (DE-1045), nearly four months ahead of schedule.

Two brief refueling stops--Midway on 12 April and Guam on 19 April--led to Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines, on 22 April, where final preparations were made for combat operations. As a unit of the Seventh Fleet, RICHARD S. EDWARDS departed Subic Bay on 25 April, arriving on the gunline near the Demilitarized

Zone the following day. Her two 5-inch automatic guns fired their first rounds in the early morning hours of 27 April. Later in the day Commander Destroyer Squadron NINE embarked as CTU 77.1.1, Freedom Train Strike Unit, and RICHARD S. EDWARDS moved north into the Gulf of Tonkin.

Working with numerous other destroyers, the ship participated in naval gunfire missions against targets in North Vietnam, including a daylight raid near Hon Mat in company with USS BERKELEY (DDG-15) on 8 May. The next morning, RICHARD S. EDWARDS and three other ships steamed into the mouth of Haiphong Harbor to provide suppression gunfire against coastal defense sites while U.S. planes began the first aerial minelaying operations. All ships emerged undamaged despite heavy hostile fire. Later on 9 May, RICHARD S. EDWARDS retired to a notification line station to warn foreign merchants of the mines.

On 12 May 1972, TU 77.1.1 became TU 77.1.2, a Linebacker Strike unit, and night raids against North Vietnam took on a regularity matched only by the underway refueling and rearming that occurred during daylight. When detached on 16 May, RICHARD S. EDWARDS had participated in sixty-seven naval gunfire strike missions, twenty of which were opposed by hostile fire. But the gun barrels cooled as the ship steamed to Sasebo, Japan, arriving on 20 May. A short seven days later, with much needed maintenance accomplished, RICHARD S. EDWARDS headed back to the combat zone.

COMDESRON NINE debarked on 31 May, and RICHARD S. EDWARDS was tasked with escort and plane guard duty for USS SARATOGA (CVA-60) from 2-13 June. On 14 June, the destroyer began a fifteen day assignment on the gunline, providing 5,754 rounds of 5-inch ammunition in support of the 22nd ARVN Division in Binh Dinh Province. A brief upkeep period in Subic Bay, 29 June to 4 July, was only an intermission as RICHARD S. EDWARDS returned to the same area as a naval gunfire support asset for allied ground offensives, amphibious and vertical envelopment operations until 29 July. Returning to the Demilitarized Zone, RICHARD S. EDWARDS' gunners supported a coordinated South Vietnamese Marine battle near Quang Tri on 1 August. On this day BIG SAL (Mount 52) and her sister (Mount 51) pumped out 1,179 projectiles in less than eighteen hours.

RICHARD S. EDWARDS left the gunline the following morning for an upkeep period in Subic Bay from 4-14 August. Her next line swing began in Da Nang Harbor on 16 August, when Commander Lloyd K. RICE, U.S. Navy, relieved Commander Water C. DEAL, U.S. Navy, as the tenth Commanding Officer of RICHARD S. EDWARDS. Naval gunfire support duties, which occupied the ship from 17-28 August, were interrupted briefly on 26 August, when Commander Cruiser Destroyer Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, Rear Admiral WOODS, U.S. Navy, visited RICHARD S. EDWARDS as she steamed on station near the Demilitarized Zone. On 28 August, the destroyer was ordered north into the Gulf of Tonkin for a second tour as a part of TU 77.1.2, Linebacker Strike Unit. In company with two other

destroyers, RICHARD S. EDWARDS conducted twenty-seven night raids on such military targets as petroleum storage areas, coastal defense sites, troop encampments and material storage areas in North Vietnam. Additional duty as a merchant surveillance ship was accomplished during daylight.

Upon completion of her assignments in the Gulf of Tonkin on 11 September 1972, RICHARD S. EDWARDS returned to the Demilitarized Zone for three days of naval gunfire support before leaving for Hong Kong, B.C.C., where she moored on 16 September. The welcome rest and relaxation concluded on 22 September, when the ship departed for Subic Bay. There the ship was placed in drydock for hull, rudder and screw repairs. This was her longest stay in Subic Bay, from 23 September to 5 October, and it was immediately followed by a visit to Kaohsiung, Taiwan, from 6-9 October. A final gunline tour from 11-25 October, as a naval gunfire support ship, brought the total number of rounds fired by RICHARD S. EDWARDS on the deployment to 21,625.

The destroyer made her final visit to Subic Bay from 27-30 October, and she was rejoined there by USS DAVIDSON (DE-1045) for the trip home. One quick stop for fuel in Guam on 2 November was all RICHARD S. EDWARDS needed to reach Pearl Harbor, where crowds of family and friends greeted the returning sailors on 10 November 1972.

RICHARD S. EDWARDS remained aboard through the remainder of 1972, enjoying a thirty day post-deployment stand down and the holiday leave period at Christmas and New Years. In addition to her record in combat, RICHARD S. EDWARDS earned the COMCRUDESPAC departmental excellence awards for Operations ("E") and ASW ("A") for the period ending 31 October 1972.

RICHARD S. EDWARDS began 1973 by enjoying the remaining days of post-deployment stand down. On 15 January 1973, following a five day upkeep period, the destroyer returned to normal operations with a week of gunnery and anti-submarine warfare exercises in the Hawaiian operations areas. This was followed by a week of upkeep in Pearl Harbor and another week of engineering, gunnery and ASW exercises. A little more than a month of upkeep and training in Pearl Harbor followed a Navy Technical Proficiency Inspection (NTPI) on 16 and 17 February, on which a grade of outstanding was received.

During the month of February, RICHARD S. EDWARDS also learned that she would be the first Pearl Harbor based destroyer to receive the newly formulated 1200 PSI Operational Propulsion Plant Examination (OPPE). The remainder of 1973 was devoted to training and preparation for the satisfactory completion of this examination.

On 13 March, RICHARD S. EDWARDS was underway for four days of engineering training with the NAVSEC Mobile Training Team (MTT), followed by ten days of upkeep and OPPE preparations and another

week of MTT training beginning on 27 March. On 31 March, the destroyer entered Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard for continued upkeep and OPPE preparations and remained there until 1 May. The Propulsion Examining Board (PEB), U.S. Pacific Fleet, arrived onboard on 1 May and the destroyer underwent an OPPE between 1 and 3 May 1973. Although the Engineering Department personnel performed well, the overall grade on the examination was unsatisfactory.

On 3 May, RICHARD S. EDWARDS again entered the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard for a period of upkeep and OPPE reexamination preparations. During this period, on 5 and 6 July, the destroyer received a Technical Standardization Inspection (TSI), passing with a grade of satisfactory.

On 13 and 14 December, RICHARD S. EDWARDS underwent her second NTPI of the year, passing with a grade of satisfactory. This inspection was followed closely by the destroyer's last underway period of the year from 19-21 December, devoted to MTT training, gunnery exercises and general shipboard drills. The remainder of 1973 was spent in upkeep and OPPE reexamination preparations in the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard.

In addition to her record for the satisfactory completion of two NTPI's and a TSI, RICHARD S. EDWARDS was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation on 28 December 1973, for service with the U.S. Seventh Fleet from 17 April to 5 November 1972.